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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00
ICAE-00 INRE-00 NEAE-00 SES-02 SAA-01 TRSE-00
OMB-01 ACDA-12 IO-13 MCT-02 /091 W
----------095018 041438Z /45
O P 041338Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9070
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4477

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE
SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION: AUGUST 4, 1978 - 1600 HOURS LOCAL

REF: BEIRUT 4449 (DTG 031341Z AUG 78)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM VISITED BEIRUT. A LEBANESE ARMY BATTALION REMAINED HALTED AT KAWKABA. ISRAELI PLANES BOMBED J SUSPECTED PALESTINIAN CAMP IN SOUTH LEB-
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ANON. FATAH VOWED REVENGE FOR THE ASSASSINATION OF THE PLO REPRESENTATIVE IN PARIS. THERE WAS AGAIN HEAVY FIGHTING IN THE EAST BEIRUT AREA, AND MORE SHELLS FELL ON WEST BEIRUT. CAMILLE CHAMOUN DENIED THAT EITHER THE PHALANGE OR THE NATIONAL LIBERAL PARTIES WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RECENT SHELLING OF WEST BEIRUT. END SUMMARY.
2. KHADDAM VISITS BEIRUT.

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A. SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER ABD AL HALIM KHADDAM MET WITH PRESIDENT SARKIS AND OTHER LEBANESE LEADERS IN BEIRUT ON AUGUST 3 (SEPTEL). ACCORDING TO AN NAHAR, NO DEFINITIVE AGREEMENTS WERE REACHED, ALTHOUGH THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT INDICATED IT TENTATIVELY FAVORED EXTENSION OF THE MANDATE OF THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCE (ADF) FOR ANOTHER SIX MONTHS PERIOD, BEGINNING IN OCTOBER. (THE RIGHTIST PARTIES, PARTICULARLY CAMILLE CHAMOUN'S NLP, HAVE INSISTED THAT THE ADF LEAVE WHEN ITS CURRENT MANDATE EXPIRES.)
B. ASKED BY REPORTERS TO COMMENT ON THE VOTE BY THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO CUT ECONOMIC AID TO SYRIA, KHADDAM REPLIED: "OUR STAND IN LEBANON IS NOT LINKED TO THAT OF AMERICA OR OTHER STATES. AT THE TIME OF THE CIVIL WAR IN LEBANON, SYRIA INTERVENED AND STOPPED THE WAR DESPITE AMERICA."
3. BATTALION STILL AT KAWKABA.
A. A LEBANESE ARMY BATTALION REMAINS HALTED IN KAWKABA. THE NIGHT OF AUGUST 3 WAS RELATIVELY CALM, HOWEVER, WITH LITTLE OR NO SHELLING BY THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS. ACCORDING TO L'ORIENT LE-JOUR, A COMPROMISE HAS BEEN WORKED OUT WHEREBY THE BATTALION AT KAWKABA WILL BE ALLOWED TO MOVE TO TIBNIN.
4. ISRAELI FIGHTERS HIT POSSIBLE PALESTINIAN POSITIONS.
A. ISRAELI PLANES BOMBED SUSPECTED PALESTINIAN POSITIONS ABOUT 15 KMS SOUTH OF SIDON ON AUGUST 3, IN RETALIATION FOR AN EXPLOSION IN A TEL AVIV MARKET THAT WOUNDED 50 PEOPLE (SEPTEL). A PALESTINIAN SPOKESMAN IN BEIRUT SAID FIVE PERSONS WERE WOUNDED IN THE ISRAELI ATTACK, BUT THAT NO FEDAYEEN HAD BEEN PRESENT IN THE CAMP. IKE REPORTED. THE SPOKESMAN REPORTEDLY ADDED "THE ATTACK WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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NO SURPRISE TO US."
B. THE PALESTINE NEWS AGENCY (WAFA) IN BEIRUT REPORTED THAT THE OPERATION IN TEL AVIV WAS CARRIED OUT BY A SPECIAL GUERRILLA UNIT OF THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE. LATER GEORGE HABBASH'S PFLP TOOK CREDIT FOR THE BOMB BLAST, IKE SAID.
5. REACTION TO THE ASSASSINATION OF PLO REPRESENTATIVE IN PARIS.
A. IN SEPARATE STATEMENTS IN BEIRUT ON AUGUST 3, THE PLO AND FATAH CONDEMNED THE MURDER OF IZZIDDIN QALAQ, THE PLO REP IN PARIS. ACCORDING TO IKE, THE PLO ACCUSED THE IRAQIS OF SEEKING TO "LIQUIDATE THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION," WHILE FATAH SAID THAT "THE CRIMES OF THE IRAQI REGIME THAT HAS ALIGNED ITSELF WITH AMERICA'S CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY WILL NOT GO UNPUNISHED."
B. LATE AUGUST 3, THE PLO'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD AN EMERGENCY MEETING TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION. BEFORE ENTERING THE MEETING, ONE COMMITTEE MEMBER TOLD IKE THAT "THE CONFLICT BETWEEN IRAQ AND FATAH HAS EXPLODED INTO AN IRAQI - PALESTINIAN CONFLICT." WE HAVE NO INFORMATION ON THE RESULTS OF THE MEETING, HOWEVER.
6. MORE FIGHTING IN BEIRUT.
A. SYRIAN SHELLED CHRISTIAN POSITIONS THROUGHOUT THE EAST BEIRUT AREA FROM ABOUT 1630 TO 1930 HOURS ON AUGUST 3. TWELVE ROCKETS HIT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE NATIONAL LIBERAL PARTY IN SIOUFI, ACCORDING TO L'ORIENT- LE JOUR. THE SYRIAN SHELLING WAS

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IN RESPONSE TO CHRISTIAN SNIPING AT SYRIANS WHICH BEGAN AT DAWN AND CONTINUED THROUGHOUT THE DAY, ACCORDING TO A SOURCE CLOSE TO THE ADF.
B. DURING THE MORNING OF AUGUST 4, SEVERAL SHELLS EXPLODED IN THE CORNICHE MAZRAA AREA OF WEST BEIRUT. ABOUT 13:30 HOURS, FOUR SHELLS EXPLODED ON THE SOUTHERN EDGE OF RAMLAT AL BAYDA AREA IN WEST BEIRUT, ACCORDING TO DATT SOURCE. ACCORDING TO A SOURCE CLOSE TO THE SYRIANS, ADF DOES NOT KNOW WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR FIRING IN WEST BEIRUT.C. IN A DISTURBING DEVELOPMENT, IF TRUE, A SAUDI PLATOON COMMANDER IN AYN AL RUMMANEH TOLD EMBASSY ON AUGUST 4 THAT TWO OR THREE DAYS AGO HE SAW MURABITOUN FIGHTERS IN SHIAH AREA FIRING AN 81 MM MORTAR. (COMMENT: THIS IS FIRST REPORT WE HAVE OF POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION OF LEBANESE LEFTISTS IN CURRENT FIGHTING. OTHER REPORTS SAY THEY ARE STAYING OUT OF IT. END COMMENT.)
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7. CHAMOUN DENIES SHELLING.
NLP LEADER CAMILLE CHAMOUN TOLD THE PRESS AUGUST 3 THAT NEITHER THE PHALANGE NOR NATIONAL LIBERAL MILITIAS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SHELLING OF WEST BEIRUT ON AUGUST 1-2. HE DID SAY, HOWEVER, THAT THE FIRING CAME FROM SINN AL-FIL, A CHRISTIAN SUBURG.
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